SAMUEL ROMANELLI AND HIS *MAŚŚĀ BAʿRĀḆ*

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The traveler's account has had a popular place in Hebrew literature, as indeed it did in European, non-Jewish literature as well. The *Massāʿôt* ('Travels') of Benjamin of Tudela and the *Sibbûḇ* ('Tour') of Rabbi Petaḥya of Regensburg, both written in the twelfth century, enjoyed numerous editions from the early days of Hebrew printing.[1] Like many, if not most, of the Hebrew travelogues that came after them, these works dealt in part or in whole with a pilgrimage to the land of Israel and an itinerary of its holy places. This was usually coupled with some information on the various Jewish communities along the way. Many Hebrew travelers' accounts read like little more than catalogues of places, names, and statistics.[2]

One of the most original and—from the literary point of view—satisfying works in this genre is Samuel Romanelli's *Maśśā baʿaraḇ* ('Travail in an Arab Land'), which has appeared in no less than nine editions beginning with its first publication in Berlin in 1792.[3] Excerpts and brief summaries of the work have appeared in Italian, German, and French, but until now nothing has appeared in English, except for a brief passage cited by Hirschberg (1981, II, pp. 290–291). The Hungarian-born British scholar Solomon Schiller-Szinessy had planned an English translation as the second part of his Hebrew edition (1886), and its scheduled publication for 1887 was announced (hence its inclusion in some bibliographies). However, it never appeared.

This article represents a first step in filling in this gap with a brief English introduction to Romanelli and his masterpiece. The writers are presently engaged in making a complete and annotated translation of

1. For Benjamin of Tudela, see the edition of Adler (1907), and for Petaḥya of Regensburg, see the edition of Gruenhut (1905).

2. See the numerous examples in Eisenstein (1926).

3. The editions are enumerated and described in Schirmann (1974, Appendix A, pp. 73–74).

the *Maśśā baʿrāḇ*. They deemed this an appropriate tribute to their mentor and friend Professor S. D. Goitein, who included within his wide scope of interests Jewish travel literature on the Arab world, and who himself edited and translated Ḥayyim Ḥabshush's delightful *Travels in Yemen* (1939, 1941 and 1983).

Samuel Romanelli: A Biographical Sketch

Samuel Romanelli[4] was a free spirit, a son of the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolution. He spent much of his life traveling in search of knowledge and in search of patrons for his literary endeavors.

He was born in Mantua on September 19, 1757, the son of Moses Ḥayy and Consola Romanelli. His father's family included several rabbis, school teachers, merchants, and minor officials, but no very distinguished figures. His mother, however, belonged to the renowned Portaleone family which for some four hundred years produced some of Italy's leading rabbinical scholars, physicians, and men of letters.[5]

Little is known of Romanelli's youth. It is clear from the mastery of Hebrew, the Scriptures, and both early and late rabbinic sources exhibited in his writing that he received a superb education in the Italian Jewish tradition. (Like the Sephardi curriculum, Italian Jewish education placed a strong emphasis on Hebrew grammar and poetry as well as on the written and oral Torah and their commentators.) He probably studied in the Talmud Torah of Mantua which also included Italian and arithmetic in its course of studies.[6] Although there had been a marked decline since the height of the Renaissance, his native city was still at that time one of the leading centers of Jewish culture in Italy. There was a major Jewish communal library attached to the Talmud Torah, and it was here that Romanelli by his own account went beyond the required school reading.[7]

4. Some later writers give his name as Samuel Aaron Romanelli. However, this middle name is never indicated in Romanelli's own writings or in contemporary sources. It first appears in Servi (1882) and Weikert (1903). Following these latter two, the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 14, cols, 228–229, has as its entry "Romanelli, Samuel Aaron."

5. The best biographies of Romanelli are Schirmann (1974) and Klausner (1960). For further details on the Romanelli family, see Simonsohn (1977, Index, *s.v.*) and Schirmann (1974, pp. 10–11, n. 5). Concerning the Portaleone family, see Simonsohn (1977, Index, *s.v.*) and *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 13, cols. 907–909.

6. For a description of the school and its program during the eighteenth century, see Simonsohn (1977, pp. 590–599); for a comparison with the preceding centuries, see (ibid., pp. 581–590).

7. Romanelli mentions Italian and Hebrew translations of Ovid's Metamorphosis that he had read there. See Romanelli (1793, p. 3).

Romanelli also acquired an impressive secular education that went far beyond the instruction available in the Talmud Torah of that time. He may have had private tutoring in some of the secular subjects—something not uncommon in Mantua at that period. But much of his wide erudition must have been gained autodidactically. This erudition frequently appears in philosophical asides and cross-cultural notes that crop up in his *Maśśā baʿrāḇ*. He was an accomplished linguist. According to Steinschneider (1900, p. 85), he was fluent in ten languages. He wrote poetry in both Hebrew and Italian and translated works from one language to the other.[8] In his writing, Romanelli shows that he was well read in the classical and contemporary literature in French, Spanish, German, and English. He was particularly fond of the poet Alexander Pope and translated his *Essay on Man* into Hebrew (*Massā ʿal hāʾādām*).[9]

From passing remarks made in his *Maśśā baʿrāḇ*, it would appear that already as a young man, Romanelli may have traveled to France and Germany.[10] Sometime during the 1880s, he made his way to England. London at that time had a small circle of *maskîlîm* and patrons of Hebrew culture. Romanelli's countryman Ephraim Luzzato, to whom Romanelli referred as the "Hebrew Petrarch", had already been living there for two decades.[11]

In 1787, Romanelli sailed from England intending to return to his native Italy. But after being stranded in Gibraltar for an indeterminate period of time, he accepted an offer from a local merchant to accompany the latter on a business trip to the Sherifan Empire of Morocco. After losing his passport, Romanelli had to remain in North Africa for the next four years, living by his wits and going from adventure to adventure. He found a livelihood as a preacher in synagogues, as a Spanish teacher, and as secretary and accountant for European consuls and for Jewish courtiers and merchants. He lived through the turbulent interregnum that followed the death of the Sultan Sīdī Muḥammad in 1790.

8. For example, he translated Maffei's *Merope* (ed. Weikert [1903] and Metastasio's *Temistocle* [Ms della Torre 267, Budapest]) into Hebrew. Romanelli translated many of his Hebrew poems into Italian and also his play *ʿÂlôt hamminḥā* (1793). His translation of Ibn Gabirol's *Keter malḵût* has been lost. See Schirmann (1966, p. 378).

9. A complete manuscript of this translation was extant until 1862. See Schirmann (1974, p. 14) and Della Torre (1862, pp. 26–28). A few verses of his translation are preserved in *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* (1974, p. 76), and several other works.

10. Romanelli (1974, pp. 56 and 98).

11. Romanelli (1799, p. 186): "ebraico Petrarca." Concerning Luzzatto, see Waxman (1960, III, pp. 134–135); Klausner (1960, I, pp. 295–306); and Schirmann (1974, p. 16).

He finally escaped from Morocco stripped of almost all his savings. It is this period of his life that is colorfully preserved in the *Maśśā baʿrāḇ*.

Romanelli made his way from North Africa to the Netherlands and thence to Berlin where he joined the intellectual circle of the *Meʾassepîm*. He had been an admirer of the German Maskilim long before his arrival in Prussia and had even written a lament (*taʾănîyyā*) in sonnet form while still in London upon the death of Moses Mendelssohn in 1786.[12] In Berlin, Romanelli was patronized by such leading figures as David Friedländer and Daniel Jaffe Itzig. For the marriage of Itzig's daughter Henrietta to Mendel Oppenheim, Romanelli composed a three-act allegorical drama based upon classical myth entitled *Haqqôlôt yeḥdālûn ʾô mišpāṭ šālôm* ('The Voices Shall Cease, or the Judgment of Peace').[13] It was in Berlin too that Romanelli published his *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* at the press of the Jüdische Freischule in 1792.

The following year, he was off to Vienna where he was invited by Anton Schmid to be a literary consultant, editor, and proofreader for the Hebrew department of the court printer Josef Edler von Kurzbeck. It was at this press, where a number of leading *maskîlîm* were employed, that Romanelli published his second allegorical play on a mythological theme *ʿAlôt hamminḥā ʾô ḥāḇēr meʾûššār* ('The Time of Offering, or A Happy Friend'). Like his previous theatrical work, this one was composed on the occasion of a wedding uniting two leading German Jewish houses. This time, in addition to the Hebrew text, Romanelli published an accompanying Italian version of the play (*Il Pomo Traslato ossia L'Innesto felice*).[14] Romanelli spent between five and six years in Vienna. He is reported to have worked also for the printer Josef Hraszansky at some point, but no details of his activities during this period are known.[15]

Romanelli left Vienna sometime between 1798 and 1799. He stayed for a while in Trieste which had a small but active community of Maskilim who maintained contacts with the Jewish intellectuals of

12. The poem which begins *Hāh ben Menaḥēm* was first published in Romanelli (1799, p. 195). For later publications, see Klausner (1960, I, p. 309, n. 6) and Schirmann (1966, p. 380, n. 23).

13. Romanelli (1791). For a synopsis of the play, see Waxman (1960, III, pp. 136–137) and Klausner (1960, I, pp. 310–311). The first scene of Act I has been published with annotations by Schirmann in Romanelli (1974, pp. 183–190).

14. Romanelli (1793). An annotated excerpt is published in Romanelli (1974, pp. 191–195).

15. Only Klausner (1960, I, p. 312), citing Reuben Fahn, *Teqûpat hāhaśkālā bevînā*, p. 29, mentions Romanelli's employment with Hraszansky. Cf. Romanelli (1974, pp. 38–39) and Waxman (1960, III, p. 136).

Berlin and Vienna. Here Romanelli published his Hebrew grammar *Grammatica ragionata italiana ed ebraica* (1799), the first Hebrew work printed in that city.[16]

In 1799, Romanelli left Austrian-controlled Trieste for northern Italy which had come under the sway of Napoleon. It is difficult to trace his movements during the next decade. He seems to have wandered about a great deal. He had visited Nice sometime around the end of the eighteenth century and spent the holiday of Shavuʿot in Lille during some unspecified year. In 1802, he was in Genoa and in 1807 in his native Mantua. There he brought out a volume of hymns and elegies to Napoleon by the rabbis of the Great Sanhedrin which he translated into Italian (*Ossia Raccolta di inni ed odi*, 1807). The following year he was in Turin where he published his metaphysical poem *Maḥăzē Šadday* ('A Divine Vision'), with an accompanying Italian version (*Illusione felice*) rather than a literal translation.[17]

The last six years of his life were spent in the Piedmont region in and around Alessandria, where he published *inter alia* an Italian translation of the Yom Kippur liturgy with an introduction and literary analysis (*Ordine cerimoniale del Sacro Ministero*, 1812). His final place of residence was in Casale Monferrato, which had a long-established Jewish community. Here he was befriended and looked after by the son of his landlord who was his pupil and confidant (Della Torre, 1862, p. 26).

Romanelli died suddenly at the age of fifty-seven from some sort of seizure while at supper on October 17, 1814. Because of his Bohemian lifestyle, his neglect of minor *miṣvôt* (and perhaps not so minor ones), and especially his sharp and at times mocking tongue, his death seems to have been passed over in silence by his contemporaries.[18] A considerable body of his writing remained in manuscript when he died,[19] and much of his work and his contribution to modern Hebrew literature was forgotten for the next half a century with the sole exception of his *Maśśā baʿrāḇ*.

16. See the entry "Trieste: Hebrew Printing," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 15, col. 1393.

17. For a synopsis and analysis of this work, see Romanelli (1974, pp. 50–51).

18. The only reference seems to be in the Jewish communal record book of Casale Monferrato. See Romanelli (1974, p. 46 and the sources cited there in n. 71). Romanelli had made himself so unpopular during his lifetime that he was actually forced out of a number of Jewish communities. See Della Torre (1862, p. 27).

19. Much of Romanelli's manuscripts passed into the possession of Lelio (Hillel) della Torre several decades after Romanelli's death. Some of this material was lost or stolen not long before della Torre's death in 1871. The remainder was acquired by the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary (Ms della Torre 267) and is described by Schirmann (1966, pp. 373–395).

The Maśśā Baʿrāḇ: Romanelli's Classic

The lasting popularity of Romanelli's *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* is due both to its content and its style. As noted above, the book differed from most of its predecessors in Hebrew travel literature in that it did not deal even in part with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, nor was it a description of the countries adjacent to it. Rather, it dealt with the Jews of Morocco, about whom little was known among their European coreligionists, a fact that Romanelli himself emphasizes in his preface (Romanelli, 1974, p. 21).

Morocco seemed to have had a particular fascination for Europeans generally in this period. Perhaps this was due to the fact that it was so near geographically and yet at the same time—with the exception of a few limited points of contact along the coast such as Tangier and Mogador—so thoroughly inaccessible and exotic. A few Europeans who had visited the Sherifan Empire in the late eighteenth century wrote books about the country. These men were mainly ex-consuls who had served in Morocco such as Georg Höst, Louis Chénier, and Franz von Dombay.[20] The latter, in fact, had been Romanelli's employer and benefactor during the early stages of Romanelli's stay in Tangier (Romanelli, 1974, pp. 39 and 46–47).[21] None of these individuals, however, traveled throughout the country as widely as Romanelli; nor did any of them live on such intimate terms with the native population at all levels, and particularly with the Jewish community, whose inner life—at home, in the synagogue and the yeshiva, and in its relations with the Muslim majority—he shared.

Romanelli states at the very outset that he had written this work for Jews, about Jews, with some treatment—by no means negligible—of the Gentiles living alongside them (1974, p. 22). Furthermore, the book is first and foremost a personal account of his own adventures that he personally experienced in the context of Moroccan daily life and current events at a particularly turbulent period, *viz.*, ". . . in relating my own personal history at length, I shall tell their history which is like the branches growing intertwined from a tree trunk" (p. 22).

20. Höst (1779; German trans. 1781); Chénier (1787; English trans. 1788); and Dombay (1801). Also deserving of mention here is the English physician William Lempriere's account of his journey to Morocco during the years 1789–1790 on a medical mission to the Sherifan court (Lempriere 1791; French trans. 1801). Romanelli was almost recruited to being his translator. See Romanelli (1974, p. 123).

21. Romanelli had a very high regard for Dombay whom he refers to as "the Viennese gentleman." He describes his first impression of him as follows: "The man's countenance reflected his innate integrity. His kind words bespoke his honorable character. . . . That very day he began to show me his honor and magnanimity" (1974, p. 39). Concerning Dombay, see Stillman (1975).

Throughout the pages of his account, Romanelli candidly shares with the reader his hopes, his fears, his successes and failures. He relates, for example, how he talked his way into trouble with a government official in Mogador, and then how he conned his way out of it (pp. 122–125). He tells how he almost was enmeshed in the snares of love with his landlord's beautiful daughter (pp. 75–76), and even how he and a Gentile companion got drunk at a wedding party and almost caused a scandal in Meknes (p. 92). Although Romanelli never suffers from false modesty and enjoys telling the reader how his wit and erudition impressed people, he nevertheless possessed the ability to make fun of himself even as he did of others. Reflecting upon the vagaries of his fate, Romanelli ironically exclaims: "When I say that I am wise, I am treated as a fool, and when I say I am a fool, I am treated like a wiseman!" (p. 124).

Romanelli's aim is to present an honest, but at the same time entertaining picture, even if it is at his own expense. As he says in his preface: "Know dear reader, that the truth alone is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I have shown no partiality to anyone, not even to myself" (p. 22).

In addition to being a witty raconteur, Romanelli possessed a keen eye for detail. As befits a good travelogue, his narrative is liberally interspersed with colorful images of native scenes—the marketplace with its sights, sounds, and smells (pp. 28, 36, 69, 91, and 108), the house with its distinctive Moroccan appointments and furnishings (pp. 29–30), wedding festivities (pp. 28–29, 53–56, and 88–89), funerals (pp. 51–52), royal court ceremonials (pp. 93–96) and military maneuvers (pp. 111–112). Food (pp. 40–41 and 91–92) and clothing (pp. 65–67, 94, and 119) as well as other aspects of local material culture are vividly and accurately described. As Klausner (1960, I, p. 319) has noted, it was not until the late nineteenth century that we find other Hebrew writers exhibiting such an ability to use the language for such lucid and detailed description.

Romanelli's ethnographic interest extended to native Moroccan customs, superstitions, and folklore. Although as a rationalist product of the European Enlightenment he frequently mocks what he considered to be foolishness (a trait that caused him trouble with Orthodox Jewish circles in Europe), he nevertheless faithfully records such typical customs as the propitiatory *ʿār* offering (pp. 40 and 121),[22] the use of spittle for medicinal purposes (pp. 52–53), divination practices (p. 43), and

22. Concerning this practice used to appease both spirits and men, see Westermarck (1926, I, pp. 518–569).

the veneration of marabouts (pp. 43–44 and 70).[23] Romanelli frequently makes comparative observations, drawing parallels between the Moroccan customs he is describing and folk practices of antiquity or of contemporary Catholic Europe.

Language was another one of Romanelli's abiding interests and the dialogues in *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* are laced with Arabic words and phrases for local flavor. Romanelli was as already noted a gifted linguist, and during the first year of his stay in Morocco he learned Moroccan Arabic. Just how he went about systematically teaching himself a dialect for which there existed no grammar book at that time,[24] he explains to the reader in the following passage which, by the way, also shows his respect for the language:

> As long as the money . . . jingled in my purse, I cast aside all my troubles into the depths of oblivion and turned my attention to studying the Arabic language with which I had begun to familiarize myself—insofar as I could afford to fulfill my wish—during these ten months that I had been in Morocco. This was not out of books—for they have not any. Neither was it out of the mouth of scribes, because the Arabs, like the Jews, will not teach their language to strangers lest it may be defiled in their mouths. It was only with the aid of the Holy Language which is cast in the same mold, and with my knowledge of its grammatical rules, that I was able to ask the pertinent questions. Sometimes, I went to a boys' school in order to know the interpretation of scriptural verses and some literary phrases. At other times, I went to groceries to see what they call various foodstuffs. I inquired, investigated, and asked methodically until I could speak the popular language, not the classical language which is no longer spoken by them. I formulated rules which I tested in speech. I observed, and I came to the realization that it was unwise of Jews to speak ill of the Arabic tongue, saying that it is corrupted Hebrew, because it contains the choicest elements of the Holy Language. . . . For each and every word, I sought its cognate in the Holy Language,[25] or in Spanish, because the latter was also mixed with Arabic from the time that Spain was under Arab rule[26] (p. 48).

23. For a comparative look at Muslim and Jewish hagiolatry in Morocco, see Stillman (1982).

24. Romanelli's benefactor Dombay, who was a trained Orientalist, had in fact been making just such a study of Moroccan Arabic during his years in Tangier, and it was he who published the first grammar of the dialect (Dombay, 1800). See Stillman (1975, p. 468).

25. Since he was not trained in the Classical Arabic language, as he was in Hebrew, and since he was working without the aid of any written materials, some of his etymologies are—to say the least—rather fanciful.

26. Furthermore, Moroccan Arabic—especially in the northern part of the country and along the coasts—contained a significant admixture of Spanish words that were introduced by Jewish and Moorish refugees from the Iberian Peninsula, as well as by commercial intercourse with its near neighbor.

Romanelli also offers valuable insights into the Moroccan pronunciation of Hebrew at that time. He describes consonants and vowels using his broad knowledge of languages to draw phonological comparisons. He even discusses stress and cantillation, contrasting the Moroccan style with the Ashkenazi. After completing this description (p. 35), he puckishly challenges the reader to try and pronounce the Hebrew phrase *ṭôḇ tittî ʾôtāh lāḵ mittittî ʾôtāh leʾîš aḥēr* 'it is better that I should give her to you than I should give her to some other man' (Gen 29:19), with the Meknasi pronunciation which would render it: *ṭôb čičči ʾöčāh lāḵ miččičči ʾöčah leʾîs aḥîr*.

No other writer in Hebrew travel literature up to that time—and indeed few since—have presented so intimate, so vivid, and so accurately detailed a portrait of a Jewish community as did Romanelli. He not only gave a remarkable ethnographic account, but he conveyed much of the texture of Jewish life in traditional Moroccan Muslim society. He portrayed both the good and the bad—the generosity, hospitality, and piety of so many Moroccan Jews on the one hand, and the widespread ignorance and superstition on the other. The hardships endured by a subject people are poignantly depicted in Romanelli's description of Jews being pulled away from Sabbath services for corvée labor by the sultan's guard (pp. 62–63) and in his horrific reporting of the persecutions that were visited upon the Jews with the accession of Mūlāy Yazīd in 1790 (pp. 127–142).[27]

Perhaps the most original and memorable vignettes in the *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* are those depicting the *Ṣuḥāb as-sulṭān*, the Jewish courtier class in Morocco that Romanelli came to observe at first hand through personal service. There is none of the tendency to idealize here that can frequently be found even in modern historical treatments of the Jewish courtier phenomenon. Although a few decent individuals like R. Mordechai de la Mar shine through as glaring exceptions to the rule, most of these men are shown to be vicious and venal abusers of power like the sinister Liahu Levi. These men, in Romanelli's damning indictment, "would disown their father and mother . . . would not recognize their brother, or even their own children." Such people "would befriend another in word and win his heart, present him with a gift, and then return to plot his murder" (p. 78).

These depictions of the court Jews in *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* are masterly studies in malevolence and power. When Liahu with his low voice quietly threatens Romanelli, the reader too trembles. It is a tribute to Romanelli's artistic skills that these men continue to haunt the reader

27. Concerning these persecutions, see Stillman (1978) and the sources cited there.

even after their violent and unlamented downfall in the final dramatic chapter. By the same token, the reader breathes a sigh of relief as Romanelli at long last strolls the streets of Amsterdam as a free man.

It is Romanelli's skill as an artistic narrator that carries the reader smoothly through the book from start to finish. Each of the fourteen chapters is carefully crafted, usually beginning and ending with the author philosophizing on the capriciousness of Fortune. Within this framework is the episode or series of episodes that confirm the philosophical observation. Occasionally, Romanelli breaks into the narrative for some additional reflections of a philosophical or academic nature. These excurses, however, are judiciously placed in the descriptive sections and are never long enough to break the flow of the story. From time to time, Romanelli addresses the reader directly in a personal tone as if he had suddenly divined the reader's thought at this particular point. He might tease the reader, admonish or cajole him. He sometimes advises him to keep a name or detail in mind because it will reappear in a later chapter.

Romanelli was an elegant stylist in the biblical Hebrew favored by the early Haskala writers. Although his language could be flowery at times, it is surprisingly vital and fluid. Because of his thorough mastery of the biblical text and its commentators, he was able to use its archaic forms and relatively limited vocabulary to the fullest. He seems to have particularly favored the Prophets and Hagiographa. There are frequent scriptural citations and allusions, and indeed almost every line is rooted in the biblical text. However, Romanelli had such a command of the language and its grammar that he was not limited to taking biblical words and phrases in calque form, but could change tense, gender, number, and word order to suit his needs. He could break up and combine phrases into new combinations, and he did not hesitate to use words in accordance with a particular exegete or his own personal interpretation in order to expand the parameters of meaning. Neither did he hesitate to create neologisms for certain modern words, as for example, *qenê matteḳet* for cannons and *āḇāq sôrēf* for gunpowder (p. 77). He made use of a very small number of foreign loanwords such as *pāspôrṭ*—for which he also employs *miḳtaḇ yeṣîʾāh* (p. 24). In one instance, he combines a biblical and a foreign vocable coining *tappûḥē ôrāniyyē* for 'oranges' (p. 119).

Romanelli was extremely fond of puns and other forms of evocative word play. When Romanelli finds employment in the counting house of a man named Jesse in Mazagan, he writes, "Jesse's home was a breadwinning house for me" (*bēt Yišay hāyā bēt laḥmî*, p. 106), a delightful play on Jesse the Bethlehemite (*Yišay bēt hallaḥmî*) of

1 Sam 16:1. The title of the book is one of the best examples of word play. The word *massā* evokes the same association of images in Hebrew (*maśśāʾ/massaʾ*) as does the English combination *travail/travel.* The Hebrew, however, has the additional meaning of a prophetic "vision" or "pronouncement" which is clearly evoked here as well since the entire phrase is taken from Isa 21:13, where it is part of a series of dire prophecies. There is, therefore, in addition to the various meanings suggested by the words of the title, an element of ominous foreboding that adds to the tension created throughout the book and prepares the reader for the disasters that occur in the concluding chapter.

Romanelli's *Maśśā baʿrāḇ* is more than a well-written and accurate travelogue. It is gripping drama and artistic literature. Little wonder then that the nineteenth-century Jewish literary historian Leopold Dukes mistakenly suspected the book to be an imaginative fabrication.[28]

28. Dukes in *Ben Chananja* 4 (1861), p. 424—cited by Klausner (1960, I, p. 316, n. 1).

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